

An aerial photograph of a river, likely the Danube, with a bright cyan line overlaid on its course. The background is a dark, textured aerial view of the surrounding landscape, possibly agricultural fields or forests, with some small white dots scattered across it.

# **Corner stones of a possible future Cultural Route in the Danube Region *Guideline***



# OUTPUT T.3.1 – part 3

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## List of abbreviations

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*DTP – Danube Transnational Programme*

*EICR – European Institute of Cultural Routes – The Council of Europe*

*EPA – Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes*

*EUSDR – EU Strategy for the Danube Region*

*LDL – Living Danube Limes*

# Introduction

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*Exploring the cornerstones of a future Danube Region Cultural Route is one of the basic pillars of the Living Danube Limes project and has its own specifics in this project. Identifying all development potentials and opportunities as well as weaknesses and threats arising from tourism in the Roman border areas of Limes Romanus is important for their accessibility, development, and protection against adverse effects on cultural heritage, natural resources, and the socioeconomic sphere.*

*The presented study is developed within the Danube Transnational Program (DTP) project, which promotes economic, social, and territorial cohesion in the Danube region through policy integration in selected fields, specific project – Living Danube Limes, valorizing cultural heritage and fostering sustainable tourism by living the common heritage on the DANUBE LIMES as a basis for a future cultural route. The main aim of the project of the Danube Transnational Program ‘Living Danube Limes’ is to encourage a common connection between all countries along the Danube Region, using the shared Romanus Limes Romanus heritage. The project's main objective is the laying of foundations for the creation of a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe spanning the whole Danube Region, which will connect the region and help to address challenges of public and political disinterest in the cultural, economic, and touristic potential of Roman heritage sites in east- and also Central European countries. It will further establish the necessary ground on which a sustainable branding of the entire region as a coordinated tourist destination with eco-friendly solutions and offers will be developed. The creation of museum and visitor site clusters that will be virtually connected via the Living Danube Limes app spanning the whole Danube Region in which the visualisation of the entire Danube Limes can be coordinated between all museums, institutions, and participating countries will become the interface with the public and help making the Danube Limes Region a much more visible and attractive tourist destination, supported by the connecting ship cruise and a coordinated series of living history events. The project therefore also includes work on strategies for sustainable tourism solutions with appropriate proposals for subsequent investments in economically feasible reconstruction and visualization measures.*

*The Living Danube Limes partnership consists of 46 partners (19 project partners and 27 associated strategic partners) from 10 Danube region countries: Austria, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania and Moldova.*

*This text aims to help start the process of creating a new cultural path of the Council of Europe, the main central idea of which would be the Roman cultural heritage on the former border of the Roman Empire, Limes Romanus. The study offers specific basic and practical advice for the creation of a Cultural Route, addressing all stakeholders and individuals who could be involved in the process. The cornerstones of a possible future path are the result of the partners joint effort of the involved to present the Roman heritage on the Danube and to connect all the countries of the Danube region.*

# 1. Cultural routes - concepts

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## 1.1 Cultural Routes - History

The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe are tools of the European cultural cooperation implemented by the Council of Europe with the "European cultural convention" in 1954. The European Cultural Convention was adopted on 19 December 1954 in Paris and came into force on 5 May 1955. It is open for signature by member states and for accession by nonmember states and the European Community. The purpose of this Convention was to develop mutual understanding among the peoples of Europe and reciprocal appreciation of their cultural diversity, to safeguard European culture, to promote national contributions to Europe's common cultural heritage respecting the same fundamental values, and to encourage, in particular, the study of the languages, history, and civilisation of the Parties to the Convention.

The Cultural Routes programme was launched by the Council of Europe in 1987 with the Declaration of Santiago de Compostela. From this point on, the Council of Europe gradually implemented a certification of routes with a cultural, social, or historical interest with a view to bringing European cultures and peoples closer. The Cultural Routes Institute was founded in 1997 and is based in Luxembourg. Its aim is to help the Council of Europe implement the Cultural Routes programme. It mainly deals with the provision of information, technical assistance, keeping archives and programme documentation, and preparing decisions for the relevant authorities. The Luxembourg authorities contribute to the institute's activities.



Fig. 1. Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes - First Certified Cultural Route  
( Source: brochure COE 2023)

In December 2010, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution establishing the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA). This agreement aimed to simplify the funding and organisation of the programme. The EPA is based in the EICR and periodically gathers representatives of some of the states that are the more interested in the programme, who are empowered to certify new Cultural Routes and evaluating already certified Routes.



Fig. 2 Logo of the Cultural Route of the Council of Europe  
( Source: www.coe.int)



## 1.2 Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe - Definition

The Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, sometimes referred to as the European Cultural Route, is a title given to cultural routes which, according to the Council of Europe, are recognized as important routes within the whole of Europe by promoting common culture, history, memory, and European integration. These routes must also meet several core values promoted by the Council of Europe, such as democracy, human rights, and intercultural exchange within cultural tourism.

As already mentioned, the Cultural Routes Program was opened in 1987 with the aim of revitalizing cultural traditions of well-known routes along which pilgrims from all over Europe headed in the Middle Ages to Santiago de Compostela, Spain. The massive movement of pilgrims strengthened their sense of belonging to a family of nations that, despite their differences, shared the same basic values derived from a common civilisation. The Council of Europe with its member states quickly realized the exceptionality of the opportunity through diverse routes to illustrate the idea of mutual unity and natural diversity of European culture, which at the same time corresponded with the goals and ideals of strengthening European identity while fully respecting the diversity of cultural heritage and with the possibility of significant support for cultural tourism.

Over the last more than ten years, twenty themes have been chosen, covering the whole of Europe, which give a guarantee of active and fruitful cooperation in the field of research, development and support of common awareness memory, history, and European heritage, cultural and educational exchanges between young Europeans, contemporary cultural and artistic practice, as well as in the field of cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development. The scope of this project was supported and expanded by the adoption of the resolution of the Committee of Ministers, establishing the criteria for the selection of topics and the approval of networks. At the same time, the resolution entrusted the European Institute of Cultural Routes in Luxembourg with the responsibility of coordinating the networks, providing expert assistance, assessing proposals for new routes, and building a Cultural Routes Research and Documentation Center in order to present the results that the program has recorded.

The main responsibility for the selection and suitability of topics and routes, as well as their approval process, remains with the relevant bodies of the Council of Europe with the assistance of the Advisory Committee, composed of representatives of the Committee for Culture and the Committee for Cultural Heritage. By 2022, 48 cultural routes have been certified. Some other noncertified routes are also projected in the records of the EICR institute, which is responsible for implementing the application process.

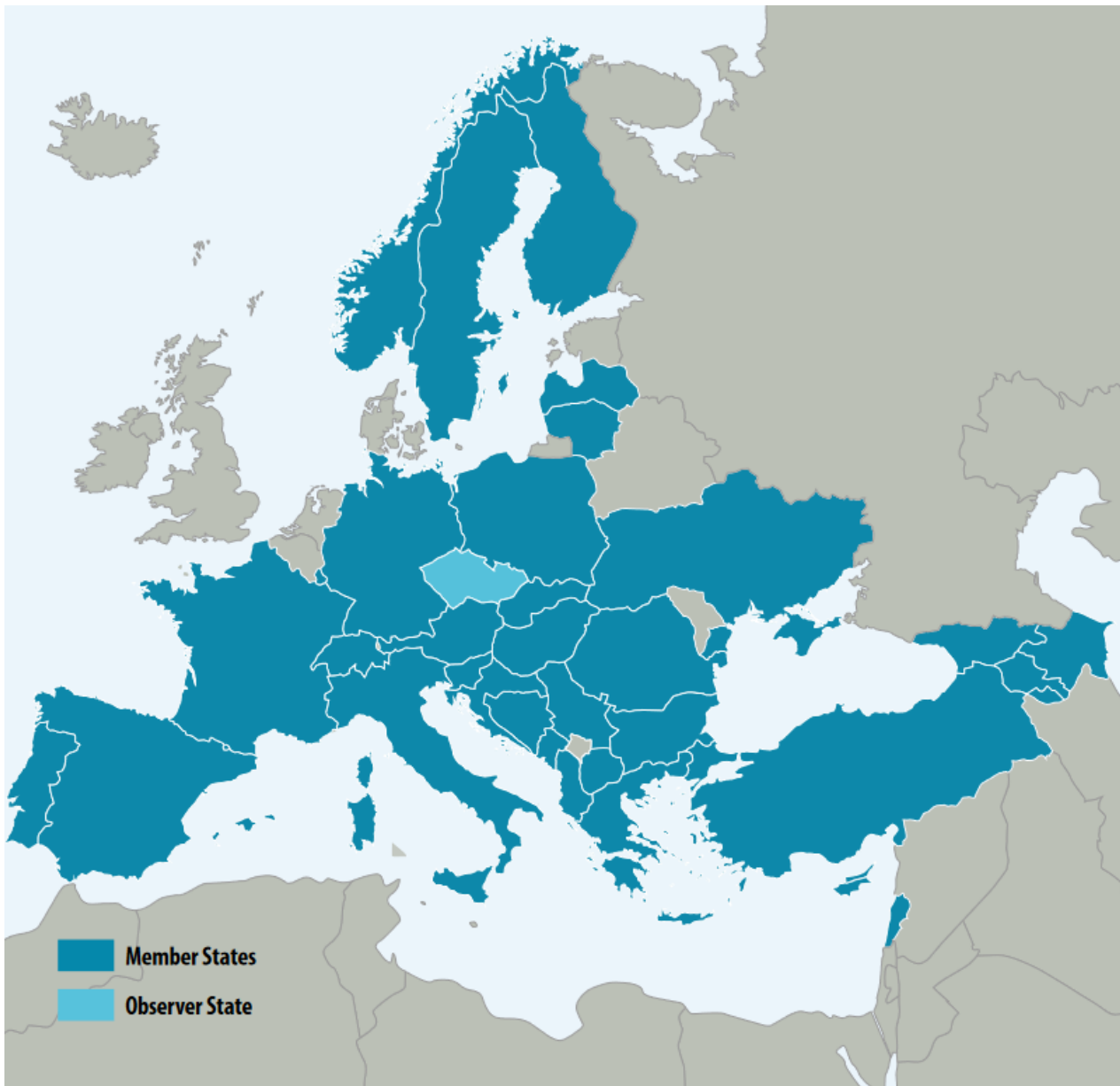


Fig. 3 Member States of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes in September 2022  
( Source: Brochure of COE 2023)

## 1.3 ROUTES4U FEASIBILITY STUDY - The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe and the Danube Region

The Routes4U project has been launched in the framework of the joint programme between the Council of Europe and the European Union. The 30-Month project (2017-20) enhances regional development through the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in the Baltic Sea, the Danube, the Adriatic and Ionian and the Alpine Region. These EU macroregions encompass 27 countries with more than 340 million people. It aims at enhancing regional development by strengthening a sustainable social, cultural, and economic development in the four EU macroregions through the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe. Promotes cultural cooperation by boosting the cultural exchanges between local, national, and international stakeholders of the four EU macroregions. It reinforces social cohesion with the participation of the civil society, ensuring the potential of cultural heritage as a resource for sustainable development. The project achieves many activities, such as the identification and drafting of guidelines for transnational regional policies on cultural routes for local authorities and operators, the development of new competencies and skills through e-learning modules, and development of tourism tools and products such as a Cultural Routes card and a trip planner. Furthermore, the Routes4U project aims to create new cultural routes agreed among the actors of Macro Regional Strategies.



Fig. 4 Danube Macro-region  
( Source: Routes4u feasibility study 2018)



‘ROUTES4U FEASIBILITY STUDY - The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe and the Danube Region’ was released on 2018. According to this study, 21 of 33 Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe were located in the 14 countries of the Danube Macro-region (Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Ukraine).

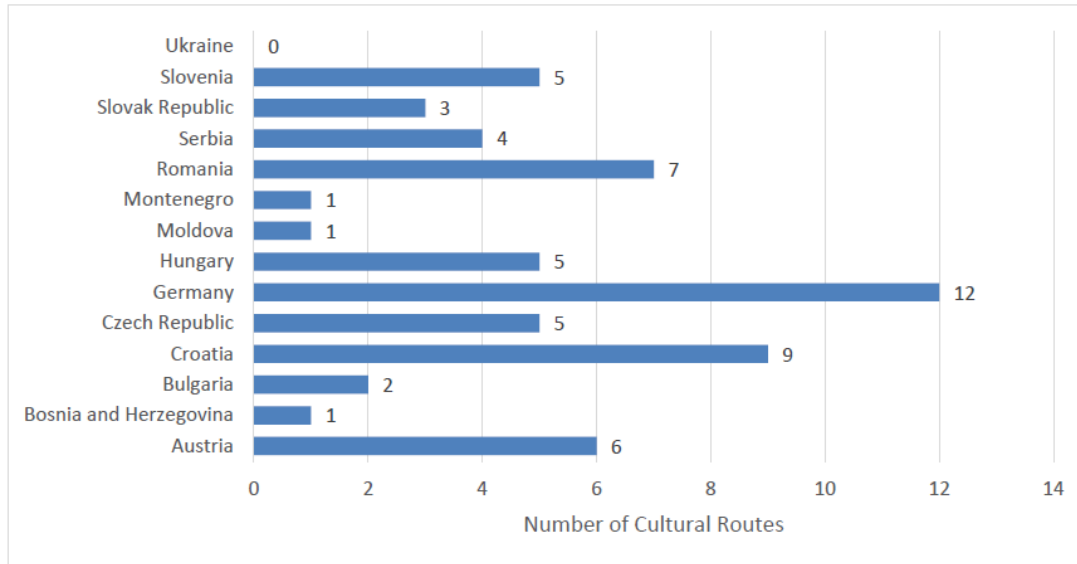


Fig. 5 Cultural Routes represented in the Danube macroregion in 2018 (Data are not updated to 2022)  
( Source: Routes4u feasibility study 2018)

According to this data, Cultural Routes members were not distributed in a geographically balanced manner in the Danube Region. Bulgaria, Montenegro, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Ukraine deserve particular attention and support, as they represented underexploited potential for Cultural Routes projects and the extensions of already certified Cultural Routes. These data are no longer up-to-date, as the number of certified cultural routes of the Council of Europe increased from the original 33 in 2018 to 48 in 2022.

However, the fact remains that no cultural route crosses every state of the Danube macroregion. That is a chance for the new route to refer to Roman cultural heritage in former Limes Romanus.

## 1.4 Types of cultural routes and existing cultural routes in the Danube Region

Existing certified cultural routes have different properties and characteristics that depend on the specificity of their own theme. According to the Interreg ECCR project, through the assessment and research of certified European cultural routes, and with the analysis carried out by the European Institute of Cultural Routes, it is possible to identify three “cultural route profiles/types”:

- **Territorial pattern routes:** routes involving territories with a common theme, generally geographically “concentrated”, close to each other. Thus, it is possible to establish and offer several paths to explore them. Generally, based on civilisation trends, shared agricultural practices/products, historically relevant events/episodes, etc. Some examples of this kind of route are as follows: *El Legado del Andalusi*, Routes of the Olive Tree, *Iter Vitis* Route.
- **Linear routes:** trails, ways, routes used for travel and trade, linked to historical events/phenomena, etc. connecting diverse territories and influencing their development and evolution. The history behind the paths is the connecting element and the shared theme, which holds the territories together. The routes themselves exist before and without the establishment of the cultural route. Some examples of this kind of route are as follows: Santiago de Compostela, *Via Francigena*, *Via Regia*, Huguenot and Waldensian Trail.
- **Reticular pattern (archipelago) routes:** routes linked by a common theme, without having territorial continuity, forming a network of points of interest bond together by a shared topic and common narrative/storey. They may be a compilation of single sites, parts of cities, whole cities, etc. What is part of the route is determined by the theme of the route. These networks are usually complex and plural. Archipelago routes may overlap with linear routes. They may be called ‘virtual routes’ because they are not “self-explaining”, but require a binding narrative and interpretation of the common theme.

Some examples of this kind of route are as follows: Jewish Heritage, Transromanica, Historical Thermal Towns, etc.

When creating a new cultural path, the characterization of its theme and type is important to name its basic attributes. The Danube Cultural Routes cover a wide field of themes. In the following, a thematic group is introduced to allow a better categorisation and classification of the cultural routes in the Danube Region. For this, the categories of cultural heritage of ICOMOS were used as a starting point. They were further developed to ensure a categorisation responding to the specific feature of Cultural Routes as landscapes:

- **Religion** is a very present theme – whether by focusing on an important historic personality or by being dedicated to cultural and religious identity in general: The Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes, European Routes of Jewish Heritage, Saint Martin of Tours Route, Cluniac Sites in Europe, European Route of Cistercian Abbeys, and European Cemeteries Route.



Fig. 6 Cultural route - Cluniac Sites in Europe certified in 2005 based on “religion” theme.

( Source: [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int))

- **Architecture** is a theme that is often represented in form of monuments, groups of buildings, or sites. The concerned routes are as follows: TRANSROMANICA, European Route of Historic Thermal Towns, ATRIUM, and Réseau Art Nouveau Network.





Fig. 7 Cultural route - Transromanica certified in 2007 based on “architecture” theme.

( Source: [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int))

- **Arts** are reflected by one Cultural Route on the Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (European Mozart Ways) as well as the European Route of Ceramics and the Impressionism Routes.



Fig. 8 Cultural route - European Mozart Ways certified in 2004 based on “Art” theme.

( Source: [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int))

- **History** is a theme present in the Cultural Routes of the macroregion. They reflect the life and heritage of Napoleon (Destination Napoleon), Charlemagne (Via Charlemagne), and the Habsburg dynasty (Via Habsburg).



Fig. 9 Cultural route - Via Habsburg certified in 2014 based on the ‘History’ theme.

( Source: [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int))

- **Food and drink** are topics addressed by three networks: The Routes of the Olive Tree deal with the civilisation around the olive tree, while the Iter Vitis Route and the the Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route are devoted to viticulture.



Fig. 10 Cultural route - Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route certified in 2015 based on the theme “Food and drink”. ( Source: [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int))

- **The movement of people** in Europe is represented through two Cultural Routes: The Phoenicians’ Route, focussing on the exchange of artefacts, knowledge, and experience through commerce, as well as the Huguenot and Waldensian Trail that deals with migration and integration due to religious persecution.



Fig. 11 Cultural route - Huguenot and Waldensian Trail certified in 2013 based on the theme “The movement of people” theme. ( Source: [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int))

## 2. Identification of Living Danube Limes project Cultural routes options

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### 2.1 Learning interaction – Connecting Cruise

As part of the Living Danube Limes interreg project, we had the opportunity to prove the "connection" of the countries in the Danube region by sailing a replica of a Roman rowboat named "Danuvina Alacris" constructed in Germany. The ship cruise along the Danube river from Germany to Romania, called - Connecting Cruise, tested not only the navigability of the Danube, but also the possibilities of individual countries to connect cruise stops at places of Roman heritage, to organize accompanying events, to make archaeological sites and museums accessible, to involve local governments, tourist agencies, stakeholders and individuals. Among the most interesting lessons from the Connecting cruise, we can choose:

1. To understand the Danube as a space for meeting, not as a border.
2. Great public interest in the cruise
3. The media
4. The ship was the most attractive element
5. The potential and enthusiasm of municipalities - smaller municipalities in a more peripheral location were sometimes more enthusiastic
6. Already existing communities can be involved (athletes - rowing clubs - retirement clubs - schools - reenactors)
7. Guided tours were very popular.

Another interesting experience was the huge public interest, which was manifested by the unexpected attendance of individual events during the cruise. Public interest in the topic of Roman heritage and its attractiveness in connection with the Danube River can be considered one of the basic prerequisites for a successful Cultural Route



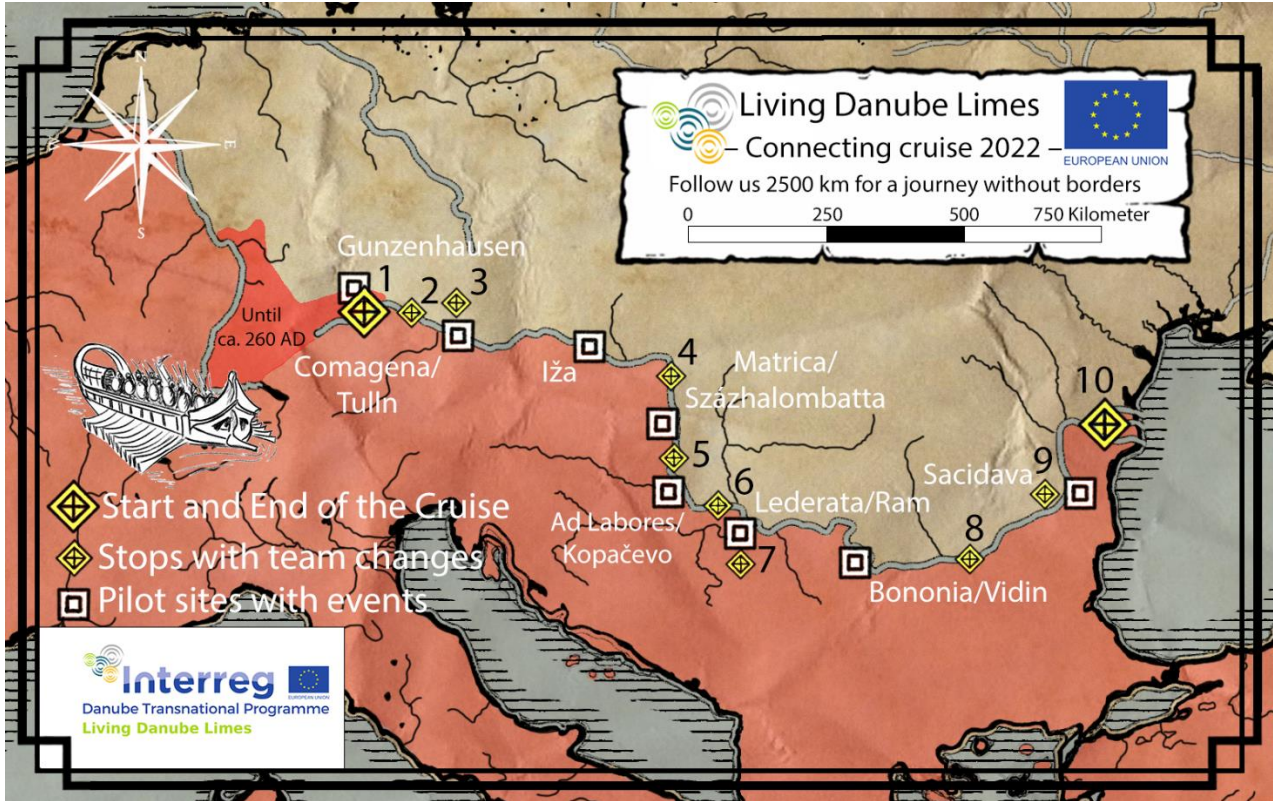


Fig.12 Connecting Cruise of Danuvina Alacris ship. ( Source: Living Danube Limes 2022)



Fig.13 Danuvina Alacris ship on the Danube. ( Source: Living Danube Limes 2022)

## 2.2 SWOT analysis on the future Cultural Route

As a basis for the SWOT analysis of the future cultural path, we started from the question: Let us imagine that we are all in the future, sometime in 2023 and we are just about to establish a European Cultural Route along the Danube Limes,

1. What could be the strength of it?
2. What could be its weakness?
3. What could be the opportunities of it?
4. What could be the threats of it?
5. What has to be done to start the process?
6. What other practical things should be considered?

Here are the results of a short survey among participants of the Living Danube Limes project.

### **Strengths:**

- A Cultural Route that connects people along the Danube.
- A cultural route in relation with water (river) is unique.
- The tangible heritage is connected to the border.
- Experience of the Connecting Cruise (LDL project)
- The information base is already gathered by the Living Danube Limes project
- There is already a multinational network operating. (DTP Programme and LDL project)
- Supported by the Danube Limes Museum Cluster/Network (LDL project).

### **Weakness**

- Diverse condition of the tangible heritage in each countries
- Non-existent tradition and uncertainty in repeating the boat voyage
- Low human capacity
- Development in an International Cooperation
- Areas without tourist infrastructure

## Opportunities

- The Danube is the location of several parallel and cultural routes that can be collaborated with or connected to.
- A particular experience with Connecting Cruise (LDL project)
- Many other sectors: sport, reenactment, wellbeing
- The Danube as a Route for travel
- Using of the boat, the lusoria Sanuviba Alacris to connect the places
- an emerging brand that is of interest,

## Threats

- Security on the Danube - available infrastructure
- Environmental threat
- Weak Transportation on the River
- The Process of Crossing Borders
- Length of the Cultural Route
- Partnership - not responsible head of the route
- Institutions that do not feel obliged to cooperate

## 2.3 Definition of a theme

Cultural Routes are regularly evaluated by the EPA and are certified by the Council of Europe based on compliance with several criteria (*CM/Res(2013)67*). They must satisfy all of the following criteria:

1. The theme must be representative of European values and common to at least three countries of Europe;
2. The theme must be researched and developed by groups of multidisciplinary experts from different regions of Europe so as to ensure that the activities and projects which illustrate it are based on consensus;

3. the theme must be illustrative of European memory, history and heritage and contribute to an interpretation of the diversity of present-day Europe;
4. The theme must lend itself to cultural and educational exchanges for young people and hence be in line with the Council of Europe's ideas and concerns in these fields;
5. The theme must permit the development of initiatives and exemplary and innovative projects in the field of cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development;
6. The theme must lend itself to the development of tourist products in partnership with tourist agencies and operators aimed at different audiences, including school groups.

The Limes Romanus theme represents European values and this theme is common to more than three desired countries in Europe. It is illustrative of European memory, history and heritage and contributes to an interpretation of the diversity of present-day Europe. We can conclude that this topic meets all the mentioned criteria of the EPA. Looking for a suitable name for the future Cultural Route, most of the partners of the Living Danube Limes project agreed that the following three are among the characteristic expressions that present the theme:

## *DANUBE – ROMAN EMPIRE – LIMES ROMANUS*

Among the proposed names of the future cultural route, we can mention at least the following:

- River Route of Limes along the ancient border of the Roman Empire
- Frontiers of the Roman Empire Route
- Limes Romanus Cultural Route on the river Danube
- Living Danube Limes Route
- Danuvina Alacris route
- Leaving Danube Limes (for Barbarians)
- Roman Danube Route

Although the Danube River is the connecting element of the theme of the Roman border, the individual places of interest are not connected by a physical path, unless, of course, we



consider the river as such. Several interesting and valuable places with preserved Roman architectural heritage do not lie directly on the former border or they are located in Barbaricum and would also deserve to be part of the cultural route. For this reason, it is possible to include the future cultural route in a mixed concept that combines the Linear type of route and the Archipelago type of route. This means that although the Danube River is a linear element in the concept of the route, the individual places of the cultural road are linked by a common theme, without having territorial continuity, forming a network of points of interest bond together by a shared topic and common narrative/story. They may be a compilation of single sites. The choice of individual sites depends on the preserved tangible and intangible heritage of the Roman Empire, their attractiveness, the possibilities of their presentation with the possibilities of operating sustainable tourism and nature protection.

## 2.4 Identifying heritage elements

In coordination with their scientific committee, project creators must identify the elements of tangible and intangible heritage linked with the theme and define a common narrative for the sites recognised as part of the route. The planned cultural route with the theme of the former border of the Roman Empire - Limes Romanus - could be a prime example of a cultural route based on the line of the fortified border on the Danube River. Individual places with remains of Roman architecture of military camps and settlements are connected by historical roads of the border zone, or they are connected by a shared topic.

In the first part of the project, the Living Danube Limes project dealt with the characteristics of the Roman Limes Romanus on the Danube River. The study, entitled “The Roman Danube Limes – a characterization”, consists of several parts that describe in detail the tangible and intangible cultural heritage:

1. Classical studies and sources providing in sight in to the Roman danube limes
2. Appearance and development of the Roman danube limes
3. The Danube in roman times – connecting waterway or natural barrier ?

4. Various aspects characterising the Roman Danube limes
5. Research history

Cultural heritage consisting of tangible architectural heritage, for example: military - fortress, watchtower, legionary camp, infrastructure – road, bridge, settlements – villages, villas, cities, elements of material culture, etc., and intangible cultural heritage such as spiritual exchange between the Romans and the local population, etc. Cultural heritage is not only part of archaeological sites, but also part of memory institutions and research workplaces that preserve elements of material culture in archives or as exhibits in museums.

From the extensive preserved material heritage, it is necessary to select such examples that will be able to be part of the Cultural Route. It is necessary to create a common story for the sites recognized as part of the route - this step is the basis that connects the sites as a part of the route into a formal network - in order to select such examples that will be able to be part of the cultural route.



Fig.14 Presentation of the Gerulata castle and archeological museum in Rusovce – Bratislava, Slovakia  
( Source: Slovakia travel)

## 2.5 Creating a European network with legal status

The process of co-operation on a common subject, involving partners from different countries, constitutes one of the most important pillars of the Cultural Routes programme. A European network with legal status, bringing together the sites and the stakeholders, needs to be established, either in the form of an association or a federation of associations, with members in at least three Council of Europe member states. Each network has to work in a democratic and participatory way with respect to its management, research, and programme of activities. The route initiators must ensure that the association responsible for managing the cultural route is financially and organisationally viable.

- Creation of a network of cooperating associations: all states lying on river Danube are member states of the Council of Europe
- Management, research, and programme of activities
- Financial viability of each partner

There are several European programmes that could support the implementation of the Route:

- Interreg Danube Transnational Programme
- Cross-border cooperation program – Interreg (for example Austria – Hungary)
- Horizon Europe
- Creative Europe
- Visegrad Fund
- Europa Nostra

## 2.6 Co-ordinating common actions

The Limes Romanus route has to encourage cultural cooperation and stimulate scientific and social debate around its theme. Cultural Routes must be active in five priority fields of action, including:

- co-operation in research and development; The route has to encourage different kinds of cultural cooperation, also at the scientific level, stimulating scientific and social debate on its theme.
- Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage; One of the fundamental aims of the Cultural Routes programme is to propose to European citizens an interpretation of their common history and shared heritage, underlining their similarity and diversity, to facilitate the debate on a common European identity. Each theme should help in this process of cultural mediation by providing a broad and representative framework work of ancient and contemporary European history. It is essential to also take into account the recent and living history of Europe: The programme, in fact, was launched, in part, to explore aspects of European culture on the ground, beyond ethnic, historical, and political oppositions and barriers. The Cultural Routes thus act primarily as an “open air” laboratory of European construction.
- Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans; The pedagogical function of Cultural Routes is underlined in particular in this field of action: each project has to provoke a series of coherent activities for young Europeans coming from different cultures and backgrounds. These are cultural events, such as twinning and school exchanges, seminars, and summer and winter schools, that could encompass questions on memory, identity, and the history of European peoples. The theme of each route and the activities organised around it must allow young Europeans to become aware of identity, citizenship, and European values, which are the basis of the programme.
- Contemporary cultural and artistic practice; The Cultural Routes are laboratories to reinterpret traditions, art, heritage, and encourage activities and artistic projects which explore the links between heritage and contemporary culture, highlighting the most innovative practices in terms of creativity, in contemporary cultural and artistic practice, particularly as regards instruction for young Europeans in relevant fields.
- Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development. The Cultural Routes are laboratories to reinterpret traditions, art, heritage, and encourage activities and artistic projects which explore the links between heritage and contemporary culture, highlighting



the most innovative practices in terms of creativity, in contemporary cultural and artistic practice, particularly as regards instruction for young Europeans in relevant fields.

## 2.7 Creating common visibility

To ensure visibility throughout Europe, each route is required to create a visibility chart with a common logo designed for the route. Following certification, both the logo of the ‘Cultural Route of the Council of Europe’ and the Cultural Route’s own logo designed for the route must appear on all its signs and communication materials.

Strengthening the presentation of Roman heritage can also be undertaken by the emerging Living Danube Limes Museum Cluster, which has developed a separate guideline for the creation and application of communication standards in building the Living Danube Limes Museum Cluster's Brand.



Fig. 15 Example - Logo of the Routes of the Olive Tree . ( Source: www.coe.int)



Fig. 16 Example - Logo of the Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route. . ( Source: www.coe.int)



Cultural route  
of the Council of Europe  
Itinéraire culturel  
du Conseil de l'Europe



Fig. 17 Logo of the Via Habsburg. ( Source: [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int))



Cultural route  
of the Council of Europe  
Itinéraire culturel  
du Conseil de l'Europe



Fig. 18 Logo of the Via Regia. ( Source: [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int))

## 3. New challenge – Setting the cornerstones of future cultural route

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### 3.1 Definition of cultural heritage with the theme of Limes Romanus

In an effort to determine as much as possible the character and features of the new cultural route with the theme of Limes Romanus, it is very important to clarify what can be understood by the term cultural heritage of the Roman Empire on the Danube River. The characteristics of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and phenomena that are carriers of cultural-historical values are essential for the definition and conception of the planned cultural route.

As a cultural heritage, we can primarily consider the architectural and engineering works that were part of the fortified border. In addition to military buildings, the border also consisted of civilian settlements full of buildings that form rural and urban urbanisms. As part of our Living Danube Limes project, this problem was processed within the first workpackage, specifically in the sections Characterization of the Roman Danube Limes, Identification of Potential of Historical Roman Story Telling, or Identification Pilot Sites.

The discussion within the planning of Danube Region Cultural Route should bring closer the topics of historical and cultural heritage as well as travel dimensions, so that it is possible to formulate a general proposal for the definition of a cultural route. This definition should be an expression of the path and it should also indicate the steps that need to be taken to reach the goal.

### 3.2 Overall objectives of establishing a new cultural path

What are the goals we want to achieve by establishing a new cultural path? Let us summarize them in a few points:

1. Sensitivity to the cultural heritage of the Roman Empire on the Danube River and its long-lasting influence on the constitution of western European civilisation

2. Targeted conservation of cultural heritage and its presentation in situ, as well as support of memory institutions, museums, academic workplaces, and research centers dealing with this issue
3. Support for sustainable and green tourism, as well as support for the local economy.
4. International cooperation in research and development.

### 3.3 Ideas on new routes European network with legal status

The Council of Europe established the following network criteria:

- present a conceptual framework based on research carried out on the theme chosen and accepted by the different network partners;
- involve several Council of Europe member states through all or part of their project(s), without excluding activities of a bilateral nature;
- plan to involve as large a number as possible of states parties to the European Cultural Convention (ETS No. 18) as well as, where appropriate, other States;
- ensure that the projects proposed are financially and organisationally viable;
- have a legal status, either in the form of an association or a federation of associations;
- operate democratically.

In support of the presentation of their projects, networks must:

- Offer a comprehensive programme and specify its objectives, methods, partners, participating countries (current and envisaged), and the overall development of the programme in the medium and long term;
- demonstrate how their activities relate to the five priority fields of action in Part II of the appendix to Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 (research and development, enhancement of memory, history and heritage, cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans, contemporary cultural and artistic practise, cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development);



- identify, in the various member countries of the Council of Europe, the main initiators, participants, and other potential partners likely to form a network; specify, where appropriate, at international level, other partner organisations;
- specify the regions concerned by the project;
- provide details of their financing and operational plan;
- append the basic text(s) relating to their legal status;
- define and implement indicators aimed at measuring the impact of the activities of cultural routes.

The choice and number of partners to create a network depends primarily on the identification of individual places on the cultural route. For example, Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route (2015) are represented by 14 partners from Bulgaria, 21 from Croatia, 1 from Hungary, 11 from Romania and 16 members from Serbia. To involve the highest and most diverse number of partners, the project may take the following steps.

1. Analysis and Mapping
2. Consultations for the nomination of sites and objects
3. Participation of stakeholders for further alignment

However, this process is time-consuming, so for the future cultural route with the theme of the Roman border on the Danube, at least basic members must be defined, for example: academic and research institutions, museum clusters, tourist organizations, or institutions of monument protection.

## Conclusions

During its duration, the Interreg project Living Danube Limes mainly focused on summarizing the Roman cultural heritage in individual countries along the Danube River. In the project, we took a closer look at selected localities - pilot sites, for which virtual reconstructions were also processed. The project brings an analysis of museums, sustainable tourism, and branding in the form of a mobile application and a cruise of a replica of the Roman rowboat Danuvina Alacris along the Danube River from Germany to the Black Sea. The definition and symbolic "laying of corner stones" of the future cultural route with the theme of Roman cultural heritage on the Danube are the culmination of the project and open the door to the challenging process of the Council of Europe Cultural Route certification itself.

## Annex

### **Resolution [CM/Res\(2013\)67](#)**

#### **revising the rules for the award of the “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” certification**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 18 December 2013*

*at the 1187bis meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members and that this aim may be pursued through joint action in the cultural field;

Considering that the main aims of European cultural co-operation are to promote the European identity in its unity and its diversity; to preserve the diversity of Europe’s cultures; to encourage intercultural dialogue and to facilitate conflict prevention and reconciliation;

Considering that highlighting the influences, exchanges and developments which have formed the European identity can facilitate awareness of a European citizenship based on the sharing of common values;

Considering that it is essential for younger generations to acquire this awareness of a European identity and citizenship and the common values on which they are based;

Considering that in order to uphold these common values and make them more tangible, it is necessary to promote an understanding of Europe’s history on the basis of its physical, intangible and natural heritage, so as to bring out the links which unite its various cultures and regions;

Noting that the identification of European values and a common European cultural heritage may be achieved via cultural routes tracing the history of peoples, migrations, and the spread of the major European currents of civilisation in the fields of philosophy, religion, culture, the arts, science, technology and trade;

Aware that such routes lend themselves to long-term European co-operation programmes in the fields of research, heritage enhancement, culture and the arts, cultural and educational youth exchanges, cultural tourism in Europe and sustainable cultural development;

Considering that such co-operation mobilises and brings together a large number of individuals, organisations, institutions and structures in Europe, and thereby contributes to the process of European construction;

Considering that in order to provide an intellectual and technical support to this co-operation, which requires considerable human and financial resources, a formal operational framework should be established enabling the reaffirmation of fundamental values, the qualitative and quantitative assessment of implementation, training of actors and a coherent communication;

Considering that such a framework enables common objectives to be pursued and guarantees the quality of the initiatives undertaken;

Considering Resolution [CM/Res\(2013\)66](#) confirming the establishment of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (hereafter “EPA”);

Having regard to the objectives and activities of the EPA,

Adopts this resolution which annuls and replaces Resolution [CM/Res\(2010\)52](#) of 8 December 2010 on the rules for the award of the “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” certification;

Adopts the rules for the award of the “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” certification which are appended to this resolution.

*Appendix to Resolution [CM/Res\(2013\)67](#)*

## **Rules**

The certification “Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe” may be granted to projects which deal with a theme that complies with the eligibility criteria in part I below, involve priority actions as indicated in part II and are presented by a single network meeting the criteria in part III.

### **I. List of eligibility criteria for themes**

Themes must satisfy all of the following criteria:

1. the theme must be representative of European values and common to at least three countries of Europe;
2. the theme must be researched and developed by groups of multidisciplinary experts from different regions of Europe so as to ensure that the activities and projects which illustrate it are based on consensus;
3. the theme must be illustrative of European memory, history and heritage and contribute to an interpretation of the diversity of present-day Europe;
4. the theme must lend itself to cultural and educational exchanges for young people and hence be in line with the Council of Europe's ideas and concerns in these fields;
5. the theme must permit the development of initiatives and exemplary and innovative projects in the field of cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development;
6. the theme must lend itself to the development of tourist products in partnership with tourist agencies and operators aimed at different publics, including school groups.

### **II. List of priority fields of action**

The projects must pertain to the following priority fields of action, while fulfilling the criteria enumerated below for each field of action:

1. *Co-operation in research and development*



In this field of action, the projects must:

- play a unifying role around major European themes, enabling dispersed knowledge to be brought together;
- show how these themes are representative of European values shared by several European cultures;
- illustrate the development of these values and the variety of forms they may take in Europe;
- lend themselves to research and interdisciplinary analysis on both a theoretical and a practical level.

2. *Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage*

In this field of action, the projects must:

- enhance physical and intangible heritages, explain their historical significance and highlight their similarities in the different regions of Europe;
- take account of and promote the charters, conventions, recommendations and work of the Council of Europe, UNESCO and ICOMOS relating to heritage restoration, protection and enhancement, landscape and spatial planning;
- identify and enhance European heritage sites and areas other than the monuments and sites generally exploited by tourism, in particular in rural areas, but also in industrial areas in the process of economic restructuring;
- take account of the physical and intangible heritage of ethnic or social minorities in Europe;
- contribute through appropriate training, to raising awareness among decision makers, practitioners and the general public of the complex concept of heritage, the necessity to protect, interpret and communicate it as a means for sustainable development, and the challenges and opportunities it represents for the future of Europe.

3. *Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans*

In this field of action, the projects must:

- include the organisation of activities with groups of young people in order to promote in-depth exchanges aimed at developing the concept of European citizenship, enriched by its diversity;
- place the emphasis on personal and real experiences through the use of places and contacts;
- encourage decompartmentalisation by organising exchanges of young people from different social backgrounds and regions of Europe;
- constitute pilot schemes with a limited number of participating countries and be provided with sufficient resources for meaningful assessment in order to generate prototypes that can serve as reference models;
- give rise to co-operation activities which involve educational institutions at various levels.

4. *Contemporary cultural and artistic practice*

In this field of action, the projects must:

- give rise to debate and exchange, in a multidisciplinary and intercultural perspective, between the various cultural and artistic expressions and sensibilities of the different countries of Europe;
- encourage activities and artistic projects which explore the links between heritage and contemporary culture;
- highlight, in contemporary cultural and artistic practice, the most innovative practices in terms of creativity, and link them with the history of skills development, whether they belong to the field of the visual arts, the performing arts, creative crafts, architecture, music, literature or any other form of cultural expression;
- give rise to networks and activities which break down the barriers between professionals and non-professionals, particularly as regards instruction for young Europeans in the relevant fields.

#### 5. *Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development*

In this field of action, the projects must:

- take account of local, regional, national and European identities;
- actively involve print and broadcast media and make full use of the potential of electronic media in order to raise awareness of the cultural objectives of the projects;
- promote dialogue between urban and rural cultures, between regions in the south, north, east and west of Europe, and between developed and disadvantaged regions;
- promote dialogue and understanding between majority and minority, native and immigrant cultures;
- open up possibilities for co-operation between Europe and other continents through the special affinities between certain regions;
- concern themselves, in the field of cultural tourism, with raising public awareness, drawing decision makers' attention to the necessity of protecting heritage as part of sustainable development of the territory and seek to diversify both supply and demand, with a view to fostering the development of quality tourism with a European dimension;
- seek partnerships with public and private organisations active in the field of tourism in order to develop tourist products and tools targeting all potential publics.

### III. **List of criteria for networks**

Project initiators shall form multidisciplinary networks located in several Council of Europe member States. Such networks must:

- present a conceptual framework based on research carried out into the theme chosen and accepted by the different network partners;
- involve several Council of Europe member States through all or part of their project(s), without excluding activities of a bilateral nature;
- plan to involve as large a number as possible of States Parties to the European Cultural Convention (ETS No. 18) as well as, where appropriate, other States;

- ensure that the projects proposed are financially and organisationally viable;
- have a legal status, either in the form of an association or a federation of associations;
- operate democratically.

In support of the presentation of their projects, networks must:

- offer a comprehensive programme and specify its objectives, methods, partners, participating countries (current and envisaged) and the overall development of the programme in the medium and long term;
- demonstrate how their activities relate to the five priority fields of action in Part II of the Appendix to Resolution [CM/Res\(2013\)67](#) (research and development, enhancement of memory, history and heritage, cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans, contemporary cultural and artistic practice, cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development);
- identify, in the various member countries of the Council of Europe, the main initiators, participants and other potential partners likely to form a network; specify, where appropriate, at international level, other partner organisations;
- specify the regions concerned by the project;
- provide details of their financing and operational plan;
- append the basic text(s) relating to their legal status;
- define and implement indicators aimed to measure the impact of the activities of cultural routes.

#### **IV. Certification**

1. The certification “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” is awarded by the Governing Board of the EPA in consultation with the relevant intergovernmental committee. It can, if necessary, seek advice from one or more expert consultants. The Governing Board may consult, if considered necessary, other pertinent committees or bodies of the Council of Europe.

In case of a negative opinion by the intergovernmental committee concerned, the agreement of the Committee of Ministers will be required for the award of the certification.

Projects and themes which help to achieve the Council of Europe political priority objectives are particularly encouraged.

2. Following the award of the certification, the entire mention “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” and the logo of the Council of Europe must be placed on all communication material, including press releases.

A manual with recommendations (or vade mecum) will be provided to networks.

Whenever possible, the certification accompanied by the Council of Europe logo must appear on road signs and boards indicating the cultural route.

3. Evaluation of networks responsible for projects having received the certification “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe”.

In addition to an annual programme of activities and an annual report submitted to the European Institute of Cultural Routes, networks must submit every three years a report enabling the Governing Board of the EPA to evaluate their activities in order to ascertain whether they continue to satisfy the criteria in parts I, II, III and IV.2 above.

If the Governing Board of the EPA finds the compliance with parts I, II, III and IV.2 above unsatisfactory it will issue a recommendation in order to ensure this compliance. If the recommendation is not followed within a year, the Governing Board of the EPA may decide on the withdrawal of the certification after consultation of the relevant intergovernmental committee.

In case the intergovernmental committee concerned is of the opinion that the certification should not be withdrawn, the agreement of the Committee of Ministers will be required for the withdrawal of the certification.

The Governing Board of the EPA decides on the practical modalities of application of this resolution. It adopts rules of procedure to this effect.



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## Web sites:

- Webpage of the Council of Europe: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes>
- COE 2023 brochure: <https://rm.coe.int/new-design-coe-220924-eicr-brochure-cr-2023-eng/1680a8acc0>
- Danube Limes Brand website: <http://danubelimesbrand.org/>
- Web page of the Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA) on Cultural Routes: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/home>
- Routes4U Web page: [www.coe.int/routes4u](http://www.coe.int/routes4u)